

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9368

UNCLAS MONTEVIDEO 2429

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EWWT, UY

SUBJECT: U.S. OWNED SAILING SHIP "FENNIA": POSSIBLE CONGRESSIONAL
INTEREST

1. ON JULY 14 EMBASSY RECEIVED PHONE CALL FROM GUST C. NICHANDROS, PRESIDENT OF PACIFIC BRIDGE COMPANY, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA (415-533-6708) INFORMING US THAT THE COMPANY IS OWNER OF WHAT WAS A FOUR-MASTED STEEL-HULLED SAILING SHIP PRESENTLY LOCATED IN RIVER URUGUAY ABOUT 8 MILES FROM CITY OF PAYSANDU. NICHANDROS EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT VESSEL WOULD BE DECLARED ABANDONED OR AGROUND UNDER A RECENT URUGUAYAN LAW AND REMOVED BY GOU BEFORE HIS COMPANY COULD COMPLETE SALE TO PORT OF SAN FRANCISCO. PORT HAS EXPRESSED INTEREST IN ACQUIRING THIS VESSEL FOR HISTORICAL REASONS. EMBASSY ALSO RECEIVED COPY OF LETTER FROM SAN FRANCISCO PORT DIRECTOR THOMAS SOULES (415-391-8000) ADDRESSED TO NAVAL PREFECTURE HERE STATING THAT PORT IS "DESIROUS OF FINDING A MEANS" BY WHICH THE SAILING SHIP CAN BE BROUGHT TO CALIFORNIA. LETTER ALSO STATES THAT THE PORT HAS BEEN "ASSURED BY MR. NICHANDROS THAT THE VESSEL IS NOT ABANDONED" AND ASKS INDULGENCE OF GOU AUTHORITIES FOR EXTENSION OF TIME IN ORDER TO COMPLETE PLANS BY WHICH THE "FENNIA" (FORMERLY "CHAMPIGNY") CAN BE "PERMANENTLY ENSHRINED AS THE LAST CAPE HORNER." COPY OF LETTER ALSO SENT TO SENATOR ALAN CRANSTON.

2. ACCORDING PORT OF SAN FRANCISCO, AS A FRENCH SAILING SHIP THE "CHAMPIGNY" BROUGHT THE LAST CARGO AROUND CAPE HORN TO THAT CITY IN 1915. UPON INVESTIGATION, EMBASSY HAS LEARNED THAT THE VESSEL IS 98 METERS IN LENGTH, HAS LOST ITS MASTS, AND IS REPORTEDLY NOW LITTLE MORE THAN A HULL FILLED WITH WATER. THE GOU CONSIDERS THAT IT CLEARLY FALLS WITHIN THE PROVISIONS OF LAW NO. 14.343 PUB-
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LISHED IN DIARIO OFIROL NO. 19492 OF APRIL 9, 1975 WHICH REQUIRES

THAT STEPS BE TAKEN TO REMOVE ALL ABANDONED OR GROUNDED VESSELS FROM THE RIVER BY AUGUST 9, 1975 OR THEY BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE STATE, WHICH WILL REMOVE THEM.

3. EMBASSY DISCUSSED THIS MATTER WITH NAVAL PREFECTURE WHICH APPRECIATED INFORMATION FROM PORT OF SAN FRANCISCO BUT REGRETTED THAT IT NOT ABLE TO GRANT EXTENSION OF TIME UNDER TERMS OF LAW. HOWEVER, EMBASSY ASSURED BY LEGAL OFFICE OF NAVAL PREFECTURE THAT A LETTER IN SPANISH FROM NICHANDROS ON COMPANY LETTERHEAD TO: CAPTAIN FRANCISCO SANGURGO, PREFECTURA GENERAL NAVAL, RAMBLA ROOSEVELT Y MACIEL, MONTEVIDEO INDICATING: (A) PACIFIC BRIDGE'S OWNERSHIP OF VESSEL (B) INTENTIONS REGARDING TOWING FROM PRESENT LOCATION, REFURBISHING (LOCAL SHIPYARD HAS ORIGINAL PLANS OF VESSEL) AND DISPOSAL IN SAN FRANCISCO AND (C) INTENTION TO NAME A LOCAL LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE WOULD PREVENT TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP ON AUGUST 9 BY ASSURING GOU THAT STEPS WILL BE TAKEN TO FLOAT AND REMOVE VESSEL. LETTER MUST ARRIVE BEFORE AUGUST 9. A FOLLOW-UP CERTIFICATE, AUTHENTICATED BY URUGUAYAN CONSUL IN SAN FRANCISCO, SHOULD BE SENT TO WHOMEVER IS THEN NAMED LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE HERE SO THAT NECESSARY STEPS CAN RAPIDLY BEGIN TO BE TAKEN, INCLUDING FLOATING VESSEL AND ARRANGING PAYMENT OF ABOUT \$2300 IN BACK DEBTS. NAVAL PREFECTURE NOTED THAT ONCE AFLOAT, VESSEL WOULD NO LONGER FALL WITHIN TERMS OF RECENT LAW.

4. EMBASSY HAS BEEN UNABLE TO CONTACT NICHANDROS BY PHONE. FOREGOING, AS WELL AS NAME OF POTENTIAL LOCAL AGENT CABLED TO HIM TODAY. THIS RESUME FORWARDED FOR DEPARTMENTS'S INFORMATION BECAUSE OF POTENTIAL PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST. SIRACUSA

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